

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-7012

March 25, 2014

The Honorable Chuck Hagel
Secretary, US Department of Defense
1000 Defense – Room 3E880
The Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1000

The Honorable Sally Jewell
Secretary, US Department of Interior
1849 C Street, NW – Room 6156
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Secretaries Hagel and Jewell,

I am writing to commend you and your staff for working cooperatively to create jobs, enhance security and modernize America's energy infrastructure through the construction of electricity transmission lines. This process has been strengthened through the formation of and participation in the Rapid Response Team for Transmission (RRTT). The effort to accelerate the permitting and construction of several critical transmission projects has and will continue to create thousands of jobs in at least twelve states, provide grid access to major renewable energy resources, and vastly improve grid capabilities.

The RRTT has improved the Federal process significantly, though there are still many barriers at every level of government that can cause projects to drag out and tax the resources of investors and developers. The 2009 Memorandum of Understanding between the involved Federal entities has helped measurably to increase coordination to expedite and simplify building of transmission lines and renewable energy projects on Federal lands. I urge your Departments and all the RRTT members to continue pressing forward with the remaining projects to realize their significant economic potential and look for similarly important projects that could also benefit from the coordinated, cost-effective approach that you have initiated.

Complementing this effort, I was very active in Congress' codification of the Department of Defense's Siting Clearinghouse in the Fiscal Year 2011 Defense Authorization bill to ensure the robust development of renewable energy sources and the increased resiliency of the commercial electrical grid, while minimizing or mitigating any adverse impacts on military operations and readiness. The statute required the Department of Defense to establish procedures for the coordinated consideration of and response to a request for a review received from State and local officials or the developer of a renewable energy development or other energy project, including guidance to personnel at each military installation in the United States on how to initiate such procedures and ensure a coordinated Department response. I am encouraged that the Clearinghouse has facilitated

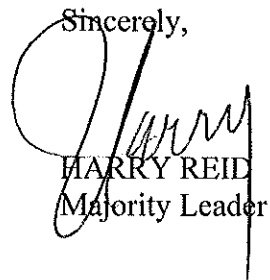
progress already on a large number of projects, but the Clearinghouse should be measured not just by the volume of projects approved, but also by its ability to constrictively engage on the most challenging projects.

Given my prior history in support of these efforts, I have been monitoring the progress of the SunZia transmission line. I understand that over \$44 million has been expended on permitting over the last five years, with delays due to the Department of Defense's reversal of two approvals and unclear guidance from the DOD. This project is an important test of the Clearinghouse model and I strongly suggest that the Department of Defense work collaboratively with the Department of the Interior immediately to find and deploy the solution that comports with national security needs and provides for the rapid construction of SunZia.

Given the delays already experienced by SunZia's investors and renewable energy generator customers, I look forward to hearing of your progress soon.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,



HARRY REID
Majority Leader

cc: Mike Boots, Acting Chairman Council on Environmental Quality
Lisa Monaco, Homeland Security Advisor